Amendments to the Specification:

The paragraph starting at page 1, line 9, is amended and now reads as follows:

-- In motor vehicles having an automatic transmission, it is known that a kick-down function is needed in order to signalize a maximum acceleration command of the driver to the motor control. In vehicles having a speed limiting function, it is known to use an escape switch which, for dangerous situations, makes possible a rapid disablement of the speed limiting function and therefore makes possible reaching the maximum vehicle speed or vehicle acceleration. The kick-down function as well as the escape switch can be realized with the aid of the accelerator pedal in that the accelerator pedal is pressed through up to a stop. Accelerator pedals, which have no mechanical connection to the throttle flap or to an actuating element for adjusting the metering of fuel (for example, to an injection valve), the kick-down function or the function of the escape switch can be electrically inquired of when a linear transducer or an angle transducer is arranged on the accelerator pedal in order to detect the degree of actuation of the accelerator pedal. The linear transducer or angle transducer can, for example, make use of a potentiometer. Here, it is problematic that, with time, because of bearing play of the accelerator pedal, deformations especially of plastic parts of the accelerator pedal and changes of the characteristic line of the sensor used for detecting the degree of actuation of the accelerator ~~pedal,~~ pedal can shift,

because of temperature drift and wear, the switch point of the accelerator pedal for the activation of the kick-down function or the function of the escape switch to another degree of actuation of the accelerator pedal. Alternatively, for the detection of the kick-down function or the function of the escape switch, a mechanical switch can be used which is actuated when the accelerator pedal is floored down to the stop. --

The paragraph starting at page 7, line 9, is amended and now reads as follows:

-- As described, the actuation of the accelerator pedal 1 takes place against a spring force. In FIG. 2, the time-dependent course of the voltage values U, which are outputted by the sensor 5, are shown. Here, it is assumed that the driver presses the accelerator pedal 1 through with a constant force from a zero position according to FIG. 1, whereat the accelerator pedal 1 is not actuated, up to the stop 10. The course of the voltage U is always proportional to the degree of actuation α. For this reason, the voltage U increases up to a first time point t1 at which a first actuating degree α_1 is reached, with a first slope S1. The spring force is to be overcome in accordance with a first spring constant up to the first actuating degree α_1. When reaching the first actuating degree α_1, the spring force, which acts against the actuation of the accelerator pedal 1, is increased to a second spring constant, for example, by switching in an additional spring or with the aid of a snap disc or with the aid of a spring-loaded bearing or in another manner known per

se. This leads to the situation that, with a continuing constant force for the actuation of the accelerator pedal 1, the actuating degree α and also the voltage U, which is proportional to the actuating degree α, ~~increases~~ increase over the time t at a second slope S2 which is less steep than the first slope S1. When reaching a second actuating degree α_2 of the accelerator pedal 1, which is greater than the first actuating degree α_1, at a second time point t2, which is after the first time point t1, the spring force, which acts against the actuation of the accelerator pedal 1, is guided virtually jump-like back to the first time constant. This relief of load is characterized by a third spring constant and takes place, for example, by a continuous removal of the additional spring or the snap disc or the spring-loaded bearing or in another manner known per se. The actuation degree α of the accelerator pedal 1 and, proportionally thereto, the voltage U increases in accordance with a third slope S3, which is steeper than the first slope S1, up to a third ~~acceleration~~ actuating degree α_3 which is greater than the second ~~acceleration~~ actuating degree α_2 and is reached at a third time point t3 which follows the second time point t2. Thereafter, the actuation degree α of the accelerator pedal 1 and the voltage U proportional thereto ~~increases~~ increase again in accordance with the slope S1 up to the stop 10. If the stop 10 is already reached at the third time point t3, then the slope dU(t)/dt is equal to zero from the third time point t3 on. At the third time point t3, the accelerator pedal 1 is in the proximity, preferably in the direct proximity, of the stop 10. --